

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMCONSUL DANANG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 183

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMCONSUL BVBN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 1047

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: UPPER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN MR 1

1. THE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN MR I HAS BECOME LESS A CONTEST BETWEEN CONTENDING SLATES THAN AN ADMINISTRATIVE EXERCISE ON THE PART OF GVN OFFICIALS TO GET OUT THE VOTE. PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE ELECTION IS LOW IN DANANG AND HUE AND EVEN LOWER IN THE DISTRICTS. IN DANANG THERE ARE SOME POSTERS ON DISPLAY FOR THE FOUR PARTIES, BUT THE DAN CHU AND WHITE ELEPHANT SLATES HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN THE THIRD SLATE AND PROPAGANDA FOR THE FOURTH SLATE IN THE PROVINCES IS PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE. IGRO, QUANG NAM, REPORTS THAT AS OF 14 AUGUST TWENTY THOUSAND POSTERS OF THE THIRD AND FOURTH SLATES HAD YET

TO BE PICKED UP FROM PROVINCE HEADQUARTERS BY SLATE REPRESENTATIVES. ONE PRECINCT CHIEF IN DANANG REMARKED SEVERAL DAYS AGO THAT EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN HIS PRECINCT HAD YET TO PICK UP THEIR CARDS.

2. THE DAN CHU PARTY, HOWEVER, IS ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE REGION. EFFORTS VARY FROM THE MASSIVE CAMP MEETING IN QUANG TIN OED 8-9 AUGUST (DANANG 1020) TO A SERIES OF VILLAGE LEVEL MEETINGS

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THROUGHOUT THUA THIEN PROVINCE. SINCE GOVERNMENT CADRES ARE

AXPECTED TO SUPPORT THE FIRST TWO SLATES AND SINCE THE DAN CHU PARTY REPRESENTS THE ONLY LEGAL FUNCTIONING POLITICAL ORGANIZATION DIRECTLY PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTION, IT AND THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS ARE BOTH CONCERNED IN MOST AREAS WITH GETTING OUT THE VOTE TO DEMONSTRATE MASSIVE SUPPORT FOR THE GVN AS WELL AS TO DEMONSTRATE ITS DEGREE OF POPULATION CONTROL. IN DANANG THE NATIONAL POLICE HAVE BEEN TOLD TO STOP PERSONS ON THE STREET AND ASK TO SEE THEIR REGISTRATION CARDS. IF THEY DO NOT RPT NOT HAVE THEM, THEY ARE TO BE ESCORTED HOME OR TO THE VILLAGE OFFICE TO PICK THEM UP.

3. THE VIET CONG ARE EXPECTED TO REACT MORE STRONGLY AGAINST THIS ELECTION THAN THEY DID AGAINST THE RECENT VILLAGE ELECTIONS WHEN THEY WERE ALMOST ENTIRELY QUIET. RUMORS OF THEIR PLANS CIRCULATE BUT WE HAVE NO REPORTS YET OF INTENTIONS TO CAUSE MAJOR DISRUPTIONS OF THE CAMPAIGN. THEIR PRINCIPAL EFFORT MAY BE SPENT DISCOURAGING PARTICIPATION WITHOUT NECESSARILY CREATING MAJOR INCIDENTS. ARRO, HUE, REPORTS THAT THE AN QUANG AND THE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET IN THUA THIEN ARE ALSO QUIETLY ATTEMPTING TO DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM VOTING, BUT THE POLICE MEAN TO "ESCORT" THE VOTERS TO THE POLLS. IN QUANG NGAI IT APPEARS THAT THE VNQDD-THONG NHAT IS PLAYING NO PART AT ALL. POPPLE

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